# PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal


HENRY BATHURST, LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH
(1744–1837)

*(Engraving by T. A. Dean from painting by Michael Sharp)*

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I supped & spent the Evening at Sub-Warden Bat=
=hursts, with him, the Warden, Webber, Holmes,
Burgh of Oriel, Daubeny Jun$^{r}$ and Rashleigh
of All-Souls Coll: at Whist there won – 0 - 17 - 0

(*Diary*, 18 March 1775)

Bathurst was notorious even among Regency bishops. Holding office until his death at the age of ninety-two (he declined the archbishopric of Dublin when he was eighty-seven) he was a shockingly bad administrator, greatly addicted to whist and to long sojourns at Bath and Malvern. 'They blame me for playing cards', he wrote, 'but I can't see to read or write and I can see the spots on the cards, so I may without sin amuse myself in this way'.

(R. G. Wilson, *The Cathedral in the Georgian Period* in Ian Atherton et al., *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City & Diocese, 1096–1996*, 1996)

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*Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society*

*Chairman & Editor*
Martin Brayne
Long Croft
Whitehough Head
Chinley, High Peak
SK23 6BX

*Membership Secretary*
Mrs Ann Elliott
22 Gaynor Close
Wymondham
Norfolk
NR18 0EA

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# EDITORIAL

Earlier this year I drew readers' attentions to the fact that more and more authors seem to be making use of the Society's edition of Woodforde's diary. Sue Wilkes, whose discriminating use of *The Diary of James Woodforde* has been commented on before, has once more drawn upon it in compiling her *Visitor's Guide to Jane Austen's England* (Pen & Sword, £12.99) as does Jenny Uglow in her latest, covering a similar period but with a markedly different emphasis – *In these times: Living in Britain through Napoleon's Wars, 1793–1815* (Faber & Faber, £25.00). They will be reviewed in a future issue of the Journal but in the meantime their authors are to be congratulated on using the Diary as a valuable historical document rather than, as have so many authors in the past, as the source of a few, endlessly repeated 'comic' tales.

Someone who doesn't doubt the importance of Woodforde as a serious diarist, rather than a mere member of the 'scribbling classes', is Margaret Bird who has been a member of the Society for very many years, much of which time has been devoted to the academic study of his contemporary and fellow diarist, Mary Hardy. Professor Wilson reviewed Margaret's four volume edition of Hardy's 36 year-long diary in the Winter 2013 Journal, describing it (and there is more to come) as 'a most remarkable achievement'. We were most fortunate in obtaining Mrs Bird to talk to us during the recent Norfolk frolic and we now have still greater reason to be thankful for she has converted her highly enjoyable and stimulating talk on Fairs and Frolics (and their decline) in late-eighteenth century Norfolk into an article the many significant implications of which we can digest and reflect upon at leisure.

One of the highlights of this year's Journal has been David Case's articles on Samuel Woodforde's wife, Jane (née Gardner). A number of people have mentioned how much they enjoyed them and it is especially pleasing that Sheila Harrison has taken David's work one step further by attempting to work out what exactly Jane's annuity would have been worth to her; and what it would have meant for her standard of living.

Another member has contacted me with a request that we reprint two of Dr Case's earlier articles – on Weston roads. Long before the

construction of the wind turbines and the airfield, the geography of the parish of Weston Longville was changing. By the time Beresford edited the Diary, it had been altered considerably since Woodforde's day, especially with regard to the road network, so that the road that he took to church is not the Rectory Road that we know today. The first of these important articles is reproduced here.

On account of family illness, our President, Suzanne Custance, has felt obliged to resign from that position. After serving on the Committee for many years, some of which as Secretary, and assisting with the organisation of Oxford frolics, Suzanne has made a huge contribution to the Society and we thank her. Our new President, Professor Richard Wilson, has been a member since the year of the Society's foundation. He is Emeritus Professor of Economic and Social History at U.E.A., is an authority on the history of brewing and the country house and has been General Editor and Chairman of the Norfolk Record Society. A more appropriate President than Richard is difficult to imagine.

Like Sir Roger de Coverley, I have often thought that "it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the Middle of Winter". My sympathy to our readers in the southern hemisphere but Happy New Year wherever you are!

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# FAIRS, FROLICS AND THE FORCES OF CHANGE IN THE NORFOLK OF JAMES WOODFORDE AND MARY HARDY

*Following her illustrated talk at the Society's frolic in Norwich on 4 October 2014 Margaret Bird considers one aspect of the lives of two Norfolk diarists who wrote contemporaneously.*[1]

I may be guilty of deceiving you. The opening words of the title of this talk conjure up some light, frothy subject as we lean back in our chairs and loosen our belts after two days of hearty eating. But fairs and frolics proved something of a battleground in labour relations in the late eighteenth century. This evening we shall be exploring the twin forces to which the servant class were exposed and which some resisted: the forces of custom versus capitalism, and custom versus Calvinism. We shall be seeing a more sober side of life than the title suggests.

Capitalism is represented for us by the Hardys of this world: William Hardy, the thrusting farmer, maltster and brewer in north-east and north Norfolk, and his diarist wife Mary who carefully logged the tasks and movements of the workforce day by day.[2] The Calvinists are represented by the touring Anglican Evangelicals whom, as a voracious sermon taster, Mary Hardy followed around parishes within a twelve-mile radius of her home. This twin pincer movement exerted pressure on the Ben Leggatts, Briton Scurls and Sally Guntons of late-eighteenth century Norfolk. Their sole protection was custom: the old ways of the prior culture as honoured by traditionally-minded employers like the Revd Mr Woodforde.

Why should I relate fairs and frolics specifically to the servant class? Firstly, it was they especially who prized them, for reasons we shall explore, although both types of event were attended by a much wider cross-section of the community. The second reason is personal. Many of us here tonight seem to be descended from servants. In all the conversations I have had so far this weekend with Society members related to characters in Woodforde's diary I have met the families of washerwomen, servants, labourers and, very occasionally, village craftsmen. Only one person seems to have hobnobbed with the nobility and upper gentry of diary circles: Chris

Bates, father of our frolic organiser Rob, who gave a cry of recognition in Letheringsett Church today on sighting the mural tablet to the 4th (and last) Lord Cozens-Hardy, descendant of Mary Hardy. Chris remembers him with great affection from long-ago days in Lancashire.[3]

**Custom versus capitalism**

This is a weekend of feasting and fun, with a celebratory harvest festival service in Weston Church to look forward to tomorrow.[4] How different it would have been for us in the diarists' time. We should have had to negotiate, and at times press hard, to attend an all-night, secular harvest frolic in a public house. Securing three days for a fair (or, in our case today, a frolic) would have sometimes been denied us. The argument behind this talk feeds into the narrative of the 'industrious revolution', for the England of James Woodforde and Mary Hardy witnessed a marked growth in the long-hours culture.[5]

I am not going to inflict too many statistics on you tonight, but here are two. In 2007, before the long macro-economic downturn which has altered working patterns, employed persons in the UK each worked on average just under 1700 hours a year.[6] From the diaries of Mary Hardy and her brewery apprentice nephew Henry Raven we can reconstruct in forensic detail the working lives of their farm servants, who in a vertically integrated business like the Hardys' worked extremely long hours. They notched up more than 3700 hours each a year. Yes: under 1700 hours, as against more than 3700.

These men were almost never at rest. They ploughed the land, sowed the barley seed, harvested it, malted it, brewed the malt, delivered the beer to the public houses, served as innkeepers during interregnums, mowed the hay for the drayhorses, collected the coal and coke for the brewery and maltings, loaded and unloaded goods from the Hardys' wherry at Coltishall, and did dozens of other jobs all logged by their clock-watching, time-obsessed mistress. Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day: part at least of each of these proved to be working days for the Hardys' hard-pressed team.

Time off was a highly prized commodity. It proved a flashpoint in the Hardy household and at times even in the more relaxed regime at Weston Parsonage. This was not class conflict but culture conflict.

As an aside, Woodforde was fairly unusual in Norfolk in employing a personal servant, a manservant, in the form of Will Coleman and then Brettingham Scurl. Such men were subject to the servant duty from 1777, unlike farm servants like Leggatt and the Hardys' workforce, whom the state valued as contributors to the nation's economy. (Similarly riding horses were taxed, whereas working draught horses were not.) Fewer than 700 households in Norfolk, excluding Norwich and Great Yarmouth, employed one or more personal servants, a category which included grooms and estate gardeners. Norfolk actually came fourth from the bottom in the county table nationally in 1780, being far removed from a 'best-seated', aristocratic county like Yorkshire or Cheshire.[7]

The pressure exerted by capitalist employers who needed to extract all they could from their men was applauded by clergy of a more driven, authoritarian and less paternalistic tinge than Woodforde. One anonymous cleric, writing in a very popular work, expressed this chilling view to servants generally: 'When you hired yourselves, you sold your time and labour to your masters.'[8]

Neither Woodforde nor Mary Hardy notes the full terms of the oral contracts made every year at Old Michaelmas (10 October), whether a new person were being hired or an existing one retained. Both record wage rates, and certain details over tea and sugar allowances, but not the holidays to be taken. Almost certainly these were not specified. Custom ruled in this sphere, and custom supposedly served as the protector of the industrious poor or labouring sort in harsher times when this country was engaged in a world war with France.[9] It is from these employers' and servants' actions that we can gauge what the expectations were over time off.

### Attendance at fairs

One of the many slides illustrating the talk shows a bar graph on the number of fairs nationally and in Norfolk in 1753 and 1792. Fairs were not dying out through natural processes: they were being deliberately suppressed, as we shall see. In England and Wales in

1753 (just after the calendar change, which massively affected fairs) there were 3203 fairs. By 1792 this figure had dropped to 1691. Of these, in 1792, Norfolk accounted for 75. Nationally, and in the county, 19 per cent were held on movable feasts (such as Mattishall Gant, held on Rogation Tuesday, two days before Ascension Day); 81 per cent were held on fixed dates (such as Reepham, on 29 June), some of these being linked to saints' days (such as Cley, in late July, for St Margaret of Antioch, the church's patronal saint).[10]

However, as individual events, there were far more fairs than these 75 as some were held twice or even three times a year on the one site. For example, the Hardys' local fair, Holt Fair, was held on the fixed dates 25 April and 25 November. By this calculation Norfolk in fact had 109 fairs, not 75. And Norfolk prized its fairs, as William Marshall observed in 1782.[11] Using Robert Poole's data and the printed lists, in England in 1792 there was one fair for every 5500 persons. In Norfolk that same year there was one fair for every 3500 persons.

Why were they prized? Apart from some religious festivals such as Christmas Day and Whit Monday, fairs and frolics were the only times of holiday for the labouring poor. They served as valued reunions. Often illiterate, the working class could not keep in touch by letter. Living often some distance from their home base they turned to the fair as a way of seeing their relatives and their friends at least once a year. Thus the local fair, the one close to their place of work, was valued as a holiday, a time to relax. The *home* fair was even more treasured: it was a solace, a joy, a renewal; and participation in it was hallowed by custom. Very many fairs traced their ancestry back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; with perhaps a few exceptions they predated the Reformation.

With this in mind a kindly employer like Woodforde would grant time off willingly: one or even two days for the local fair (the second day being designed to enable the hangover to lift); two or, if lucky, three days for the home fair. At Weston Betty Dade was granted time off in 1788, 1791 and 1792 to see her family at nearby Mattishall, taking two days by agreement and with the rector's leave.[12] Even the controlling Hardys managed to observe these customs some of the time, Mary Hardy being rather more generous

to her maidservants than her husband was towards the farm servants. A strong believer in family bonds, she allowed the young women to renew theirs by granting them time to get home for the fair even when it was up to 22 miles away.

(Interestingly, negotiating and granting time away for the maids should really have been the responsibility of the rector's niece, but Woodforde never allowed Nancy her due place as formal housekeeper in his household—a slight their social circle would have noted. Also, through her uncle's private diary, Nancy has come down to us under the pet name employed almost certainly only by her very close family. She signed herself A. M. Woodforde, and to honour Nancy we should perhaps refer to her always as Anna Maria.)

Both the rector and the brewer's wife watched the clock, and their diaries are peppered with words of exasperation if the absentee did not return to base within a reasonable period. Both recorded absences using clock time, for neither wished to be taken advantage of. Woodforde noted that the biddable Sally Gunton and Ben Leggatt returned 'in good time' (a loaded phrase) from St Faith's Fair in 1800, while Winfred, whose mother lived at Witchingham and who thus had Reepham as her home fair, was actually clocked back at 4pm on her second day away.[13]

Mary Hardy's maidservants travelled much greater distances: as, for example, to Upton from Coltishall for Acle's Midsummer Fair (28 miles for the return trip), to Tunstead from Letheringsett for Worstead Fair (about 38 miles), and to Coltishall from Letheringsett for the Whit Monday fair (44 miles).[14] The Hardys supplied public houses across a radius from the brewery of 25 miles, and her wide-ranging diary covers much of the eastern half of the county.

Although the loyal, committed farm servants were her husband's province the diligent diarist noted absences. Isaac Pooley was clocked out in 1776, after a morning spent ploughing, to attend Worstead Fair. Trouble brewed when he was not back the next day: he had evidently been granted one and a half days away.[15] This was a sensitive issue. In April the previous year Robert Manning had come back drunk from Cakerow Fair (called Scarecrow Fair by Mary Hardy, although, as with so many fairs, she and the family

liked attending it), and Manning had again become drunk on duty following Coltishall Fair a few weeks later. Something snapped for his master. Manning was summarily 'turned off' and his annual contract terminated on the spot.[16]

The diary contains many such illustrations of these flashpoints, the small individual acts of mutiny (caused probably by resentment over the brewer's shackles) developing into serious consequences for the servant class: the Mannings lived in a tied cottage. The cards were stacked against the servant, for the annually-hired had no protection from the magistrates. Hours of work and wage rates as laid down by statute affected only those hired by the day or the week. In theory the annually-hired had no time they could call their own.

These forces of social change can be seen as occupying a spectrum. Towards one end the rector's establishment at Weston was largely governed by master–servant custom; towards the other end that at the Coltishall and Letheringsett breweries was dominated by capitalist–employee considerations. Close examination of the two diaries would suggest that Woodforde usually divided his day, and that of his team, 'our folk', by task time, whereas Mary Hardy most definitely noted even the most trivial events of the day by clock time. The notion that the predominance of clock time came in with factory-working during the industrial revolution is swept away. Annually-hired servants were already subjected to the rule of the clock as part of the *industrious* revolution.

In a malting and brewing family, over whose work excise regulations held sway, this was even more pronounced. As a private brewer Woodforde was exempt from monitoring by the Excise. For a commercial, wholesale brewer all manufacturing was watched and controlled by the vigilant gaugers. And Yorkshire-born William Hardy had himself served as an excise officer for twelve years 1757–69; he was still in the service at the time of his marriage in 1765. Mary Hardy was the daughter and sister of maltsters at Whissonsett in central Norfolk; her childhood home lay across the yard from the small maltings. Her three children were trained to respect clock time, even the six-year-olds noting the events of the day in this style in their mother's diary. Marking the passing of the hours had come to stay.

## Suppression and the new puritanism

As we have already seen, fairs were on the wane numerically. Their calculated suppression, already well under way by 1792, gained momentum in the fifteen years following the outbreak of war with France in 1793 and during the increasingly puritanical mood of the times. The country had its back to the wall, with waves of panic over social unrest, bread riots, treason, sedition and repeated invasion threats; 1797 has come down to us as the Year of Peril.

At Letheringsett in the 1790s Mary Hardy turned her back on the playhouse, on cards, on dancing, and on so many of the entertainments which had characterised the early years of her diary. Her children followed suit. The diarist led the way over adopting Methodism: by 1798 she was a paid-up member of the Wesleyans' Cley society, and in 1808 she re-established a Wesleyan meeting house in her village. Those in her wider circle appear to have adopted a more sober lifestyle, and the travelling players stopped touring the villages of north Norfolk.

Against this backdrop of a sombre national mood and gritty fight for survival such frivolities as fairs and frolics seemed inappropriate to many; we do not hear that the labouring poor shared this view. The Bishop of Norwich (Charles Manners Sutton), as lord of the manor of Horning, suppressed Horning Fair, an event which the Hardys had massively supplied with beer in the 1770s and which their workforce had liked to attend.[17] Binham Fair, near the Hardys on the north Norfolk coast, was also suppressed by the lord of the manor.[18] The forces of social control, Sabbatarianism and the elimination of 'habits of pleasure and indolence' were at work.[19]

The weekly newspaper reflected the new mood. Before 1793 there had been regular reports of wrestling and boxing matches, attended by up to 20,000 spectators; some of the Hardys' men, including the luckless Manning, had enjoyed time off for these. Water frolics similarly attracted huge numbers, William Hardy attending Hoveton Water Frolic in August 1776 and the Coltishall schoolmaster Hickling Water Frolic in July 1777. Many of these public gatherings appear to have ceased in the harsher times of the French wars; certainly many fewer bulletins about them were published.

War weariness set in, and public-fast fatigue. With every sinew

stiffened to achieve maximum output (and add to the nation's coffers by means of the malt duty and beer duty which kept the Royal Navy at sea and the British Army in the field) the farmers were no longer allowing their men time off for days of national humiliation and thanksgiving. At Weston this was not so apparent. It was not a malting and brewing village, and it is possible that Custance control over public observance was exerted even from Bath. But at Letheringsett it was most marked. In 1806 the rector lamented to the Bishop (by this time Henry Bathurst) not only over Mary Hardy's active Wesleyanism but about a new development: the farmers (including her husband) were not paying their men on days of public fast and thanksgiving. In a telling phrase, 'They have forsaken the good old custom.'[20]

This more serious mood was capitalised upon by the touring Anglican Evangelicals. Pouring out of Cambridge, where they had been trained by the Revd Charles Simeon of King's; funded by the Elland scholarships inaugurated by the Revd Henry Venn in his days in Yorkshire; given pulpit space by networking absentee incumbents such as the Revd William Atkinson of Bradford: these intense, driven young men with short-lived curacies were supported emotionally and spiritually by the first of Norfolk's clerical societies, the Little Dunham society, inspired by Simeon and by John Fletcher of Madeley in Shropshire and run by Henry Venn's son John, Rector of Little Dunham, near Swaffham. The younger Venn was soon to move to Clapham and play a leading part in the Clapham Sect.[21]

There was an explosion of sermon tasting in Mary Hardy's circle of friends and family; even the maidservants joined in. Most harvest frolics and tithe frolics escaped the new Calvinism abounding in the pages of her diary, but much else by way of fun pursuits died out. The Evangelicals took their calling extremely seriously, and did not bend to local customs as did the more tolerant, adaptable clergy like Woodforde. Let us take just two battlegrounds on which the Calvinists chose to make a stand.

### Harvest festivals and private baptism

We are sometimes told that harvest frolics in public houses were not

transformed into harvest thanksgivings held in church until the mid-nineteenth century; various parishes claim to be the pioneers. The Evangelicals who later joined the Little Dunham Clerical Society on its foundation in 1792 were far in the vanguard of these developments.

The Revd William Ivory, Perpetual Curate of West Somerton in the wilds of the Fleggs (a tiny parish to which the Revd Selwyn Tillett of Weston is moving immediately after our frolic) and a founder member of the Little Dunham band, is the first I have discovered to institute a religious service for harvest—as early as some time between 1778 and 1784. He told the Bishop of Norwich in 1784 (Lewis Bagot) that he administered the Lord's Supper 'at the three grand Festivals and, after the Harvest, as an act of thanksgiving to God, for the very great Crops this little Parish has been blessed with'.[22] Thus was the secular feast translated into the sanctified.

Woodfordeans know that even the affable rector could be driven to fury over baptismal practices. On this issue he moved his position on the spectrum far along from the 'custom' end. While he held private baptisms for some of his parishioners' offspring (notably the Custances' children, but also for some others) even when there was no sign the 'little stranger' was in danger, he steadfastly resisted further stretching of the rubric. Harry Dunnell, ancestor of our frolic organiser Rob Bates, adopted the stance of many of the flock across the county when in 1777 he sought a private baptism for one new-born when an older member of the Dunnell clan had not yet been brought to church to be received.

As we know from the visitation returns, most of the clergy, and especially those reared in Norfolk, were happy to oblige: they themselves would allow their children to accumulate before bringing them to be received. The Evangelicals, by contrast, were loud in their protests to the Bishop about such slackness, and were prepared to precipitate great rifts in the congregation over the issue. Woodforde was a West Countryman, with none of the conditioning experienced by the native clergy, and had a major falling out with Dunnell.[23]

Even the most committed Evangelical would have applauded him.

**What made Woodforde tick?**

I have been a member of this Society for more than 22 years. I have been a regular reader of the parson's diary for nearly 55. For much of that time I have been unable to fathom the apparently timid, even ineffectual rector. Why, I have asked myself, did he offer so little leadership in his patch? Why did he not respond to the complaints of poor Nephew Bill and the despairing Anna Maria and inject a little more dynamism into their life at the rectory and across the parish as a whole? What made him *tick* ?

It was only in 2005, on studying in detail Elizabeth Longmate's monumental 800-page thesis on Woodforde's sermons, that I at last felt myself groping towards an understanding of his stance. And it was that stance, I suggest, which shaped his attitude to his servants. The thesis contains the text of all Woodforde's surviving sermons, preached—with one exception—in Somerset and Norfolk 1764–94. That one exception, the longest of the sermons, gave what was for me the key to unlocking the door into Woodforde's personality. It is held still at New College, Oxford, where it was presumably delivered.

Betty Longmate identifies it as completed on 1 January 1776 and thus predating his finally taking up his new living. It 'summarises his Christian faith'. His gentle Latitudinarian leanings are already fully developed. He is, he admits, no orator like Tully [Cicero] or Demosthenes. Instead he holds fast to the belief that the example of 'the pious liver' will trump all oratorical devices, for, speaking of the flock, 'very few . . . will be disputed into a good life.'

Sermonising does not bring people to Christ, he avers. It is the quietly lived, undemonstrative Christianity which carries the greatest force of persuasion: 'Example is a living precept.' Hence the secluded life at the parsonage, the emphasis on the daily routine and living at peace with one's neighbours: 'Therefore the pious liver is and will be a better advocate for the faith of Christ than he that is able to dress up the finest oration in the praise and defence of it.'[24]

So here is a defence not of salvation by good works, nor of justification by faith alone. Woodforde, then in his mid-thirties, will cleave to godly living and kindly custom against the harsher forces

of capitalism and the sternly expressed strictures of the Evangelicals. The servants at Weston, as they settled into becoming acquainted with him later that year, were to have good cause to be grateful to their new master.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. *talk* The presentation was given with no written text or notes, and this article has been pieced together from what I remember of my speech.
2. *diarist wife* Mary Hardy (1733–1809), née Raven, wrote daily at Coltishall, on the Norfolk Broads, 1773–81 and then at Letheringsett, near Holt, until her death in March 1809. Her text, with that of her diarist nephew Henry Raven (b.1777), writing in the same household 1793–97, runs to nearly 600,000 words. The full text of both has been recently published (M. Bird, ed., *The Diary of Mary Hardy 1773–1809* (4 vols Burnham Press, Kingston upon Thames, 2013) and M. Bird, ed., *The Remaining Diary of Mary Hardy 1773–1809* (Burnham Press, Kingston upon Thames, 2013)). The books were reviewed in our Journal by Richard Wilson in winter 2013 (Journal XLVI, no. 4, pp. 21–6).
3. *cry of recognition* 'I remember *him*! *Splendid* chap! He would supply all of us journalists with a cask of beer at the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show.'
4. *Weston* Throughout my talk I referred to Weston, and not Weston Longville. In all the 18th-century official documents I have studied at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO), including the episcopal visitation returns (of 1784, 1794 and 1801 in the DN/VIS series), and in the press notices in the *Norwich Mercury*, it is very clear that the parish, village and church are referred to as Weston. In the MS direction, at the top of the printed questionnaires, successive bishops address Woodforde as the 'Rector of Weston'. I throw out this thought. Could New College, who were lords of the manor as well as owners of the advowson, have been acting manorially in referring to the living as 'Weston Longeville'? I believe Woodforde gives the college's version principally (or possibly *only*) in 1774 on hearing of the death of Dr Ridley and his own appointment—but then he drops the 'Longeville' on going to live there. Aylsham is Aylsham Lancaster manorially, just as Fakenham is Fakenham Lancaster. But those manorial names are not applied to the towns and livings. Was one of John Beresford's lesser-known legacies the common adoption of Longville as a suffix to Weston, or had Longville already crept into general use before 1924?
5. *'industrious revolution'* The phrase coined by Jan de Vries in 1994. For its applicability to the working class of our period see especially Hans-Joachim Voth, *Time and Work in England 1750–1830* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), and Craig Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and material culture in agrarian England, 1550–1780* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011).
6. *2007 figures* OECD statistics (OECD iLibrary: OECD (2013) 'Average annual working time', *Employment and Labour Markets: Key tables from*

*OECD, no. 8* (http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/average-working-time_20752342-table8, accessed 8 Sept. 2013)). The actual figure for the UK in 2007 was 1677 hours. The averages for Poland were 1976 hours, the United States 1798, Japan 1785, Australia 1711, France 1485 and Germany 1422 hours.

7. *servant duty* See the work of John Chartres using the tax returns of 1780 (J. Chartres, 'English landed society and the servants tax of 1777', in N. Harte and R. Quinault, eds, *Land and Society in Britain, 1700–1914* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 34–56; see esp. pp. 41–52 and table 2.6 on p. 50).
8. *chilling view* Anon., *A Present for Servants, from their Ministers, Masters, or Other Friends* (10th edn London, 1787). p. 35. The author continues: 'And, besides the sin against God in idleness, you defraud your master, if you idle away an hour that should be employed in his business' (p. 35). Mrs Sarah Trimmer, who wrote treatises for Sunday school children, took the same approach: the idle young servant-girl was robbing her mistress. These and other analyses of the life and times of Mary Hardy will be discussed in my forthcoming volumes of commentary, *Mary Hardy and her World 1773–1809*.
9. *custom* E. P. Thompson in his essays in *Customs in Common* (Penguin Books, London, 1993) and John Rule in *The Experience of Labour in Eighteenth-Century Industry* (Croom Helm, London, 1981, esp. pp. 12–15, 56–7, 212–13) both chart the decline of custom and the social effects on the poor. William Cobbett as late as the 1820s, in his *Rural Rides*, frequently inveighed against the loss of the time-honoured traditions extended to the servant class which had helped to ease their lives. But his ideal of Farmer Hodge was fast disappearing from the scene.
10. *fair statistics* Robert Poole's *Time's Alteration: Calendar reform in early modern England* (Routledge, London, 1998) has a vast amount of useful and insightful data on fairs and dates. See also, for Norfolk, the printed lists such as those in the Norwich directories of 1783 and 1802 and in N. Kent, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk* (London, 1796), pp. 166–7; also notices in the *Norwich Mercury* announcing adjustments to the dates of individual fairs. The printed lists often omit what were considered (by the authorities, but not by the poor) to be minor affairs, such as Lyng, the fair nearest to Weston.
11. *Norfolk fairs* 'Yorkshire has its *feasts*; other countries their *wakes*; and Norfolk its *fairs*' (W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of Norfolk* (2 vols London, 1787), vol. 2, p. 261).
12. *Betty Dade* *The Diary of James Woodforde*, 30 Apr. 1788, 31 May 1791, 15 May 1792.
13. *clocking back* *The Diary of James Woodforde*, 17 Oct. 1800, 30 June 1792.
14. *greater distances* *The Diary of Mary Hardy*: *Diary 1*, 24 June 1774; *Diary 4*, 9 May 1807; *Diary 2*, 2 June 1781. The farm boy Jonathan and the diarist's 11-year-old son William also attended Coltishall Fair in 1781 from Letheringsett.
15. *Isaac Pooley* *The Diary of Mary Hardy*: *Diary 1*, 13–14 May 1776 (Worstead

Fair was held on the fixed day 12 May, but in 1776 that day fell on a Sunday).

16. *Robert Manning The Diary of Mary Hardy: Diary 1*, 5–6 April 1775, 6 June 1775. Cakerow Fair, also called Hautbois Fair by the diarist, was held in the north of Horstead parish at Mayton.
17. *Horning Fair Norwich Mercury*, 11 July 1801, 10 July 1802, 9 July 1803; in this third year the Bishop's temporary ban became permanent.
18. *Binham Fair Norwich Mercury*, 20 July 1793.
19. *social control* The Bishop was a strong supporter of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. His unwavering views on 'regular and daily labour' and the elimination of 'inveterate habits of pleasure and indolence' (while being applied in this instance to the 'Mohawk Indian') come across clearly in one of his sermons in London (C. Manners Sutton, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1797), p. 19). These sterner notes are also sounded in some of the Norfolk clergy's visitation returns of 1794, 1801 and 1806 also in the Norfolk Record Office.
20. *Letheringsett* NRO: DN/VIS 41/4, Holt deanery episcopal visitation 1806, Letheringsett return by the Revd John Burrell.
21. *Evangelicals* The tale is told by Mary Hardy herself, and in the editorial notes in the last of the Diary volumes, *Diary 4*.
22. *West Somerton harvest thanksgiving* NRO: DN/VIS 30/11, Flegg deanery visitation 1784, W. Somerton return by the Revd William Ivory. He was a literate (a non-graduate clergyman). This part of my talk developed into a running gag during the weekend, with frequent joshing over early harvest services. One member gave me a sudden dig in the ribs in our pew as we listened to the preacher's views on the subject at Weston Church on 5 October; another sent me an e-mail a few days later with a link on the earliest known dates for harvest services. But I say, Let's hear it for West Somerton.
23. *Harry Dunnell The Diary of James Woodforde*, 1 Oct. 1777. Dunnell would not have been the first to attempt to train the new arrival in the preferred ways of the parishioners.
24. *sermons* E. J. Longmate, ed., 'The Sermons of Parson James Woodforde 1740–1803' (unpub. external PhD thesis, University of London, 1997), p. 3; see also pp. 393, 399, 400. Part of the general introduction to this important thesis may be found in E. Longmate, 'Woodforde's Sermons', Journal XXX, no. 4 (Winter 1997), pp. 4–14.

## JANE WOODFORDE'S ANNUITY

David Case's articles in the Journals for Summer and Autumn 2014[1] concerning Jane Woodforde, formerly Gardner, the wife of Samuel Woodforde, give rise to an intriguing question: *What was the value, in today's currency, of the annuity of £170 to be paid to Samuel's 'dear wife Jane Woodforde' after his death?* Jane did not inherit any capital. Her annuity was to derive from the proceeds of Samuel's career as an artist – a career in which she had played her part, as his model – and it would cease on remarriage. The remainder of Samuel's estate was bequeathed to his three siblings, William, James and Anna Maria Woodforde. Samuel's assets would have included his third share, with Bill and Nancy, of the £3,500 raised by the sale of their father's Sussex estate in 1801.[2] Samuel would have viewed this as 'family money', to be kept within the family.

Evidence unearthed by David Case reveals that by the 1830s Jane Woodforde's income from her annuity had fallen. Appeals to the Woodforde family to make up the shortfall had proved fruitless and Jane appears to have turned to the Royal Academy for assistance, for in 1839 she was awarded a pension of £60 per annum. Sometime in the 1840s she petitioned the Academy for an increase in her pension to 'relieve her from her present Wants and Embarrassments'. The wording of this document suggests that Jane was suffering financial hardship and it appears to substantiate Roy Winstanley's view that £170 a year 'was little enough to live on in Victorian England'.[3] However, David Case's visit to Amberley uncovered a very different story, and Jane emerges as the owner of a substantial property portfolio. It is these contradictory impressions that lead to the question: *What was Jane's annuity of £170 worth in today's currency?*

The website measuringworth.com[4] appears to offer an instant answer, providing two measures to compare the relative values of income and wealth over time. The first is the *Historic Standard of Living*, which sets the price of commodities at a given period against today's prices, based on the retail price of a typical 'household bundle'. This 'bundle' is similar to the 'shopping basket' used to measure inflation rates and produce the Retail Prices Index. It comprises basic commodities such as food, housing, clothing and

other items purchased by the average consumer. To make comparisons across a lengthy period of time is not a straightforward task. Many of the contents of today's shopping basket did not exist in the past, so we are not comparing like with like. Allowing for these factors, the *Historic Standard of Living* measure comes up with this answer: in 1817, the year of Samuel Woodforde's death, the worth of his widow's annuity of £170 at today's values would be £10,860.

How does this compare with the pension which a retired person receives today? Currently, in 2014, the basic state pension of a single person is £113.10 per week, a total of £5,881 per annum. The weekly pension for a married couple, if both have been working, is £226.20, a total of £11,762 per year.[5] It appears, therefore, that Jane was better off than a single person today living on a state pension and almost as well off as a married couple.

However, this is not the end of the story. The calculations have to be adjusted to allow for the changes brought about by industrialisation and technological advance, and this brings into play the second measure of comparative incomes, *Economic Status Value*. This measure takes into account the increase in gross national product over a given period of time. As output increases nationally, the nation becomes wealthier and the individual's spending power increases. Put more simply, as the national cake grows larger so each person's slice is bigger. By this measure, Jane's economic status, the level of income which her annuity of £170 would give her today, stands at an astonishing £176,500. This extraordinary outcome demands further investigation.

*Economic Status Value* involves 'prestige value', the position which a person occupies in the hierarchy of spending power. In everyday life we all know where we stand in relation to other income groups. And this approach can be used in comparing relative incomes at different times. A starting point for comparison is the income of the agricultural labourer. Farm workers' wages are well recorded over a lengthy period and the status of the farmworker in the hierarchy of earning power is essentially unchanged – they are still one of the lowest paid groups in society. Figures for the year 1824, the nearest available date to 1817 when Samuel Woodforde died, show that the weekly wage of an agricultural labourer in

Sussex, the county to which Jane returned after her husband's death, was nine shillings and sixpence, making an annual income of £26.[6] Jane Woodforde's income of £170 was six and a half times greater than this.

Today, the basic hourly rate for an agricultural worker, set by the Agricultural Wages Board in January 2014, is £6.77 per hour.[7] On a 40 hour week, the weekly wage is £270.80, the annual income £14,081. A person six and a half times better off would be in receipt of an annual income of £91,526. This brings Jane's income somewhat closer to the Economic Status Value calculated by the authors of measuringworth.com. And if we compare Jane's Economic Status income in 2014, assessed at £176,500, and compare it with the national average wage of £26,500, we discover that her income stands at just over six times higher than the national average.[8]

Any level of income is meaningless unless set against prices, and it so happens that figures are available for 1795, when the level of prices was closely comparable to those in the period of Jane's widowhood. The year 1795 marks the end of a lengthy period of price stability. For the next 20 years, the era of the Napoleonic Wars, the cost of living rose by about a third, with food prices particularly affected. However, by 1820, when Jane Woodforde had settled into her new home in Amberley, prices had dropped back to a level much closer to that of 1795 and continued to fall for the next 30 years.[9]

The figures for 1795 were gathered by the Reverend David Davies and Sir Frederic Eden during an investigation into the earnings and household budgets of agricultural labourers across the country.[10] There were regional variations, those living in the south being the worst off. The wage of an agricultural labourer in Berkshire, with a wife and five children, was 8 shillings a week plus wife's earnings of sixpence. His household budget amounted to 11 shillings and two pence per week, of which more than half was spent on bread or meal. Annually, his income was £22.1s, his expenditure £28.12s. The shortfall was made up by parish relief and increasing debt. In the north-west the standard of living was higher. In Kendal, Westmorland, a man with a wife and three children, earning £30 a year, was able to feed his family for £20 a year. The consumption of

oatmeal and potatoes rather than the white bread eaten in the southern counties enabled him to live more cheaply than his counterpart in the south.

If the cost of basic necessities at the very lowest level of earnings ranged from £20 to £30 a year, we might expect that Jane would spend rather more than this on her weekly budget. However, even assuming that Jane enjoyed a standard of food and basic commodities above the minimum, with an income of £170 at her disposal she would have had a considerable amount left over to spend on other things, or indeed to save.

The agricultural labourer's standard of living, at the very bottom of the income scale, provides a baseline. Closer to Jane Woodforde in income was the household of the writer Thomas Carlyle and his wife Jane.[11] In 1834 they moved from Scotland to London and rented an 8-roomed house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea for £35 a year. Carlyle's annual income from writing was £150 (less than Jane's annuity of £170) and his wife had a private income of about the same amount. Their living expenses, after the payment of rent, and including the wages of a maid, were 30 shillings a week – £78 a year. If Jane's living expenses were as high as this (and probably, living quietly in Amberley with her niece, they were not) she would still have had surplus income of about £90 a year.

In the light of this information, today's valuation of Jane's income in terms of economic status appears more credible. It is consistent with her ability to buy property: a house for herself, Boxwood, in her home village of Amberley, purchased in 1818 for £125;[12] the leasehold of a cottage in Chelsea, rather touchingly named Box Cottage, acquired in 1840 for the use of her brother and his family;[13] and in 1844 a loan of £300 to her brother-in-law secured against the substantial house in Amberley known as Bishops.[14]

Jane's application for assistance from the Royal Academy was probably as much to do with what she felt was her entitlement as to financial necessity. Which one of us, if we thought there was an opportunity to enhance our pension, would hesitate to do so? It is unlikely that Jane's annuity had fallen by as much as 30 per cent. The £60 pension awarded by the Royal Academy would have made good a shortfall and added to her income. Jane almost certainly felt that she had lost out to the Woodforde family when Samuel's

unwitnessed will was proved in their favour. And the fact that her annuity would cease on remarriage restricted her freedom. Her income of £170 was not a negligible sum that she could easily afford to lose. She was financially independent only so long as she remained Samuel Woodforde's widow.

I began by asking the question *What was Jane Woodforde's annuity worth in today's currency?* and I have been unable to find a simple, straightforward answer. However, the figures provided by measuringworth.com now seem less astonishing than when I started on this quest. And the process of finding out has been most illuminating. Sums of money in past times, which at first sight seem derisory, have turned out to be worth a great deal. And if the statistical model established by the authors of measuringworth.com is applied across the board we gain a new perspective on the income and wealth of James Woodforde himself and everyone connected with him.

As for our first impression that Samuel Woodforde had failed to provide adequately for his widow, that has been dispelled by David Case's researches. We may conclude that Samuel did his best to dispose fairly of his assets. The family estate would pass to his brothers and his sister while his widow received a substantial income derived from his earnings as an artist. Jane Gardner had left Sussex for London in the early 1800s, probably to go into service, and returned to her home village a decade or so later as a woman of independent means, able to buy a house, support herself and her niece and make generous provision for members of her family. Her £170 annuity gave her purchasing power far in excess of what she would have enjoyed if she had married a man of her own social class. The calculations which suggest an equivalent income of £176,500 may continue to challenge our credulity, but all the evidence points to the conclusion that Jane Woodforde's annuity was not merely a comfortable provision, but made her into a woman of considerable wealth.

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2. i) *The Diary of James Woodforde*, Volume 12, 11 April 1789, p. 135, Parson Woodforde Society. Reference to Heighes' Will.

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11. *Ibid*, pp. 235–236.
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13. Journal XLVII, No. 2., p. 16, Note 18.
14. Journal XLVII, No. 3, pp. 32, 33.

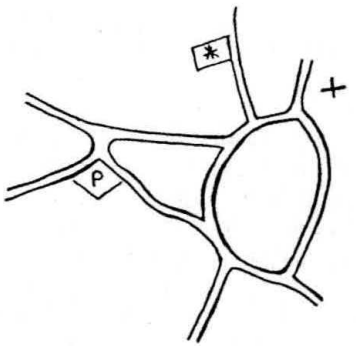
## WOODFORDE'S WESTON

The article which recently appeared in the Journal (XVIII, 4) entitled Weston Families – Gooch and Bushell prompts me to write on the subject of roads at Weston. The article opened with the following introduction:

> To-day, the building which stands on the approximate site of James Woodforde's Parsonage is isolated. Between it and Weston Church is an expanse of fields with no sign that there have been any human habitations there. In the Parson's time the appearance of this part of Weston must have been very different . . .

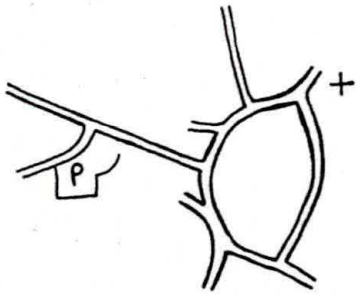
Readers of the Journal and those who revisit Weston from time to time should be aware that the road layout between the Parsonage and the Church has undoubtedly changed since Woodforde's time. My Case ancestors were farmers in a small way in Weston and some time ago I was delighted to find 'Case's Pightle' marked on a map which is to be found in the Norfolk Record Office.[1] This little field is located at the top of Post Office Lane. Since making this discovery I have taken every opportunity to collect information from various maps of Weston which I have come across. From these sources it is clear that in Woodforde's time *two* roads led away from the Parsonage in an easterly direction, one apparently direct to the village centre and the church and the other in a more south-easterly direction. These two roads (see 'A') are clearly shown on a map published in 1797 following surveys during the period 1790—92,[2] and on the map at the Norfolk Record Office[1] which is unfortunately undated. The triangular area between these two roads is shown[1] divided into three little fields: 'The Croft' (Divers Owners); 'the Croft Pightle' (E. L. Lombe Esq.); and 'Little Field' (Divers Owners). The last-named runs alongside the road from Weston to Weston Green. An 'Enclosure Map' dated 1826[3] indicates the position of the two original roads, but truncated as shown (see 'B'), and the position of the new road in the line as we know it today. A similar map in the archives of New College[4] explicitly names this 'The New Road'. Later maps such as the first edition of the Ordnance Survey of 1838 show the roads as they are now (see 'C'). Some large scale maps suggest that the line of one of the old roads, the more southerly one shown in 'A', is still indicated

A



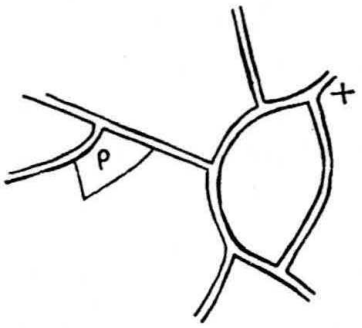

1790

B




1826

C




1838

P : Parsonage
+ : Church
* : Case's Pightle

by the field boundary or hedge line, but I have not recently checked whether this is still in place.

In Woodforde's time the road system was thus clearly different from the one we now find and this should be taken into account as we think of the Parson making his way to and from Weston Church. The sketches I have made from the maps referred to are not precise, but are certainly accurate enough to indicate the changes which have taken place. I have assumed, but cannot be sure, that the new road was laid down at the time of the enclosure activities around 1826 and therefore post-dates Woodforde; I have no recollection of his ever referring to the making of new roads in the diary.

There are several maps of this area in the New College archives, but most of them relate to College land affected by enclosure and dated 1826. A survey with maps[5] dated 1794 provides a delightful source of farmers' names, their fields and valuations, but unfortunately this related mainly to Witchingham. If members of the Society know of the whereabouts of other eighteenth or early nineteenth century maps of the village of Weston I should be most interested to hear from them.

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4. New College, Oxford, Archives Cat. No. 5348 'Inclosure Map 1826'.
5. New College, Oxford, Archives Cat. No. 1654 Survey with two maps.



By permission of
Nos. 1 and 2, the County Archivist, Norfolk Record Office
No. 2, the Norfolk Record Society
Nos. 4 and 5, the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I have just read the Journal articles on the Parson's tithe-payer John Culley and it occurs to me that your readers may be interested in some of my own research into the Culley family.

I notice how judicious marriage among the Baptist community appears to have enhanced the family's fortunes. In the generation previous to John, three brothers including John's father are described as Yeomen through their lives but 'gent' in their wills. John's father was pastor of Claxton Baptist chapel for 27 years in addition to being a substantial farmer. At this marriage John is 'of Ludgate St Martin' and his eldest son, Henry, was baptised there in September 1766. Henry and his brother Richard each married a Colman sister, members of the mustard dynasty, again Baptists as I understand. In later generations there are several examples of Culley cousins marrying, presumably where there was a dearth of suitable Baptist partners outside the family. The rescue of Simon Wilkin appears in part to be the Baptist community rallying to the needs of one of its members and I dare say contact between the various families led to opportunities in trade.

The Richard Culley, great-grandfather of portrait John, founder of the Meeting Hill Baptist church, was a Worstead weaver as was his son John. The family can be traced back as substantial Yeomen through a series of wills to the late 15th century in the area north east of North Walsham around Felmingham and Tuttington. Many branches of the family subsided into labouring or trades. One of these made his fortune by marrying the widow of a notorious smuggler and another, who rose from obscurity to the gentry at about the same time, was proprietor of the Globe Inn at Blofield before becoming a farmer, with an eldest son who, before becoming an alderman of Norwich, was a Wine and Spirits dealer, suggesting liquor, legitimate or not, was a possible source for the family wealth.

Dissenting is a common theme with many of the branches although not a topic often recorded. A John Culley is clerk in 1597 at Skeyton. It may be this John Culley who is deemed 'unfit' in 1587, refusing to sign the Three Articles although his benefice then is Tuttington.

In my own family, a nineteenth century relation is described as an itinerant Primitive Methodist preacher. I understand they, along with some Baptists, practised informal baptism which may account for the unrecorded baptisms of my 2×g-grandfather's siblings. Two of his cousins and their father trekked across the Plains to join the Mormons. Hard times for the majority.

The baptism of John (portrait) Culley at Buckenham and of his siblings both there and at Merkshall also appear officially unrecorded. I only know the dates from my Australian contact with no source quoted.

I have never managed to draw any of the current Culley family on the question of how far membership of the Baptist community contributed to the 'Costessey Culleys' prosperity. It may be the personal discipline and probity of strict Baptists were the main factors.

David Culley
*Kirton, Lancs.*

[Editor's note – The journal articles to which Mr Culley refers are M. Brayne & P. Stanley, John Culley: he dined at the Parson's table, XXXVI, 2 and Culley Portraits, XLIV, 1.]

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## *THE ALLURE OF THE ARCHIVES*

John Beresford was not feeling very well when he opened the first of Woodforde's diary notebooks. He had gone to Dr Woodforde's of Ashwell in Hertfordshire suffering with a nervous disorder almost certainly the consequence of his experiences in the Great War from which he had emerged appalled by the loss of some of his dearest friends, including Noel Compton Burnett and Raymond Asquith, and by the inhumanity of twentieth century warfare. He was later to write in the Introduction to Volume III of *The Diary of a Country Parson*:

> In the Great War of 1914–18 the French and Belgian peasants continued to plough their fields far within the battle areas, and

through all the agony of that terrible time they presented the touching spectacle of peace 'subsisting at the very heart of endless agitation'.

Dr Woodforde recognised the nature of Jack Beresford's complaint – 'post-traumatic stress disorder' we should probably call it today – and prescribed reading and editing his now famous ancestor's manuscript diary. It offered 'tranquillity' to a troubled soul. He responded with delight to the notebooks 'with their marbled board sides and decorous leather backs' and 'written in a handwriting as clear as print, almost as small, and much more closely compressed',[1] recognised their value and brought them to the attention of an appreciative public.

As well as enjoying the contents of the Diary, it is clear that Beresford also relished the physical contact with the notebooks themselves. A decade after first being introduced to them, he persuaded the Vicar of Honingham and East Tuddenham to delve into his parish chest and pull out 'Mr Du Quesne's parchment-covered Tythe Book, written out in his bold clear hand'.[2] How different would the impact upon his imagination surely have been if instead of reading Woodforde's own 'handwriting as clear as print' he had read a typewritten transcription, or, instead of turning the pages of Du Quesne's tithe book, he had read it through the mechanism of a fiche-reader? And when it came to writing his essay on the '45 was he not inspired by the fact that he read the hurried, breathless letters to the Duke of Devonshire on which that work is based in the Library at Chatsworth? [3]

At the most local level the parish chest was the original archival depository. In the definitive work on the subject W. E. Tate provides numerous examples to show that, excellent as many such collections were, careful maintenance of parochial records was by no means universal:

> In recent years a magnificent linenfold credence in an Essex church had been pickled with chemicals, every scrap of its patina had been removed, and the piece literally skinned to the bone through the efforts of a too enthusiastic custodian.
>
> A fine medieval chest in Nottinghamshire had been allowed to stand for years on the floor of an abandoned church until it was now almost in pieces (its contents when last we examined it were

the discarded toys of the vicarage children, who apparently used the church as playroom on wet days).

The woodworm in a wonderful seventeenth century chest in Derbyshire were left undisturbed for so long that they had entirely devoured the internal partitions. When last we saw it the sides were mere shells and the worms having exhausted the nourishment to be found in the chest had transferred their attention to the contents … a fine collection of seventeenth and eighteenth century parchments.[4]

While it is doubtful if any two parish chests are of the same design and condition, this description of that at Pitcombe, Somerset, by our late president, George Bunting, is probably typical:

Pitcombe's chest is … probably mid- to late-17th century. It is a joined double chest of oak in poor condition and repaired and restored in part. With three fielded panels on the front and a single at each end it is typical of its type. It had three locks originally, but two are missing. Three separate keys, one each for priest and two churchwardens, would have been in use. The plain top is in two sections but with the original strap hinges on the right side only. Inside, lid and back have been crudely repaired.[5]

While those who recall the 1994 fire which devastated the Central Library at Norwich may demur (for the records only narrowly escaped), there can be no doubt that the contents of the parish chest are better looked after by professionally-trained archivists in a carefully controlled, if generally less picturesque, environment.

The older and more fragile such historical documents are, the more aware the reader is likely to be of their physical nature. This is something touched upon in Arlette Farge's recently translated book *The Allure of the Archives*:[6]

Your hands grow stiff as you try to decipher the document, and every touch of its parchment or rag paper stains your fingers with cold dust.

When I read this I was reminded of what I had written of the logs of Royal Naval lieutenants caught up in the Great Storm of 1703:

A fine sprinkling of dust and particles of soot cover the logs, hinting, even today, at the 'galley-pepper' which inevitably 'flavoured' the sailors' rations of salt port and biscuit and

> doubtless found its way aft into the officers' messes and even into the confined quarters of the lieutenants.[7]

Officers' logs are not usually especially interesting. They record long, often monotonous days at sea, latitude and longitude, wind direction and strength, depth of water and, where shoal, the nature of the bottom. Very occasionally, as during the Great Storm of 26/27 November 1703, they record, although often in a tight-lipped, naval fashion, events of great drama such as when Lieutenant James Collier of HMS *Hampton Court* recorded:

> Very hard gales with thick weather ... at 11 it began to blow Extream hard, lowered our yards but the sails blew all away as did our Main and Mizen topmasts with the violence of the wind. Also the sprit sail which was furled ...[8]

Collier's log was there beneath my fingers – a survivor of the Great Storm three hundred years ago.

I imagine that it will be a long time before all the Naval log-books in the National Archives (captains' logs) and National Maritime Museum Library (lieutenants' logs) are digitised but, increasingly when we visit such archives, we call them up and find ourselves confronted not by the documents themselves but by micro-film or fiche. This, of course, is as it should be but it does rather lessen the romance – the allure – of the archives and, in particular, it deprives us of that initial excitement:

> Gently, you begin undoing the cloth ribbon that corsets it around the waist, revealing a pale line where the cloth has rested for so long.[9]

The first archival material that I ever had physical contact with was a good deal less dramatic. It was Coventry's *Register of Apprentices' Indentures*.[10] Like many administrative documents it was essentially little more than a list – of the names of the apprentices, their masters, their trades and the name and trade of their fathers. The register had been established following the passage of the Coventry Election Act of 1781. The Act was a consequence of a disorderly election, fighting between rival electioneering parties and corruption on the part of the Corporation. Coventry, like Norwich and Preston, was a 'freeman borough' which meant that the electorate was unusually large. Freedom was

achieved 'by servitude', that is by completing a seven year apprenticeship. The City's corrupt corporation had inrolled men who were not qualified to vote to increase the chances of their preferred candidates being elected. Hence the riot, the Act and the Register.

At first I only sought the names of my watchmaking forebears but as I waded through volume after weighty volume, page after foolscap page, names began to recur, patterns emerged and years later these young men became the subject of a master's dissertation.

Thanks to the efforts of the Coventry Family History Society, the Register is now available as a splendid CD which can be searched in the comfort of one's own home. But it is not quite the same as turning the pages of a two hundred year-old Register and admiring the clerk's copperplate writing, in what was then a tiny record office, in a medieval street beneath the magnificent spire of St Michael's.

When it comes to family history, one man's amazing archival find is, of course, another man's tedious piece of parish pump bureaucracy. Thus while, in the modern,well-equipped successor of that cramped room in the medieval street, I was thrilled to 'find' the Minute Books of The Recruiting Sergeant Watchmakers' Provident Society and to read the contributions which my own ancestors had made to its discussions, I am aware that my best bitter is your ditchwater.[11] Yet such dcuments, which may not have seen the light of day from one decade's end to the next, have a particular charm for they put us in touch in a direct, unmediated way with our ancestors. It is the next best thing to getting a letter from one's great grand-parent.

The digitisation of archives will preserve the originals for very much longer while at the same time making the information they contain a great deal more accessible, often to those who have never themselves stepped foot in a reading room. In exchange for these benefits, we sacrifice what Farge calls 'the tactile and direct approach to the material, the feel of touching traces of the past'.[12] While evidence of the tears of distraught mothers are rarer in the archives than in fiction, sand grains used to blot a letter and even a hair from the head of a long dead reader are occasionally to be found and the power of such 'traces' to evoke the long-ago cannot be replaced.

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9. A. Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, 2014.
10. Coventry Record Office, *Register of Apprentices' Indentures*.
11. Coventry Record Office, Minute Books of the Watchmakers, Mechanics & General Provident Society, 1845–1970.
12. A. Farge, *op. cit.*

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## FROLIC REPORT 2014

This was the first time that we Woodfordeians had assembled in Norwich for four years but, although a few more walking sticks may have been in evidence and despite some notable absentees, we put our best foot collectively forward and sporting our autumnal colours cut a pretty impressive figure in the lovely Norfolk countryside. While my knowledge of the geography of Norwich is notoriously suspect, I did have the distinct notion that the Mercure hotel is in the vicinity of the ground upon which the great October fair – St Faith's – was held and festivity was certainly in the air as we assembled for the AGM on the evening of the third of that month.

This was the first Frolic to be organised by Robert Bates and such was its success that we must hope that it will not be the last. He introduced a number of happy innovations and the first of these was that of having the AGM *before* dinner.

Our Chairman, Martin Brayne, thanked some 40+ of us for

attending and extended an especially warm welcome to Janet Epps, a direct descendant of the Revd John Wilson of Lyng, who had travelled from Australia to be with us. In his annual report he went on to highlight the reprinting, thanks to Peter Jameson, of Volume 11 of the Diary covering the years 1785–1787. This means that only two volumes are now out-of-print, one of which, Volume 7, is currently being revised by Heather Pearson for publication next year.

Another significant event reported by the Chairman was the purchase by the Society of a major Samuel Woodforde oil painting – 'The Fortune Teller'. Both painting and frame require some attention and, consequently, the Committee has decided to launch an appeal, the first in the Society's history for our own direct benefit. In order that the painting may be more widely seen, Stourhead, the National Trust property in Wiltshire with which Samuel had strong associations, has been approached with a view to a loan agreement.

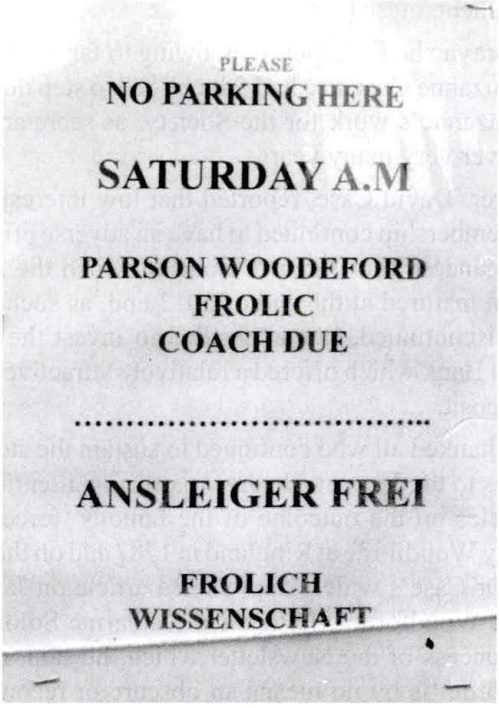
Sadly, Mr Brayne had to report that, owing to family ill health, our President, Suzanne Custance had felt obliged to step down. He paid tribute to Suzanne's work for the Society, as secretary and frolic organiser, over very many years.

Our Treasurer, David Case, reported that low interest rates and a declining membership continued to have an adverse effect upon the Society's finances. The Barclays Bond in which the Arisoy fund was invested matured at the end of 2013 and, as such bonds have now been discontinued, it was decided to invest the fund in the United Trust Bank which offered a relatively attractive 2.25% for a one year deposit.

Mr Brayne thanked all who continued to sustain the steady flow of contributions to the Journal. He drew particular attention to Carole Child's articles on the outcome of the famous 'forced marriage' conducted by Woodforde at Ringland in 1787 and on the Wilsons of Lyng, and Dr Case's widely appreciated article on Jane Gardner, Mrs Samuel Woodforde. He thanked Katharine Solomon for the continued success of the Newsletter which, he said, reminded us that Woodforde 'is by no means an obscure or recondite literary figure'.

The Committee and the Honorary Auditor, who was especially thanked, were re-elected and it was announced, to universal approval, that Honorary Membership was to be given to one of the Society's best informed and most energetic members, Mrs Phyllis Stanley.

The next morning the frolicking proper began as we all boarded a coach, initially bound for Reepham, provided with *A Short Guide to the Three Churches*. There we were greeted with the warmest of welcomes which recalled the occasion in September 1785 when James and Nancy went to Reepham to dine and 'were very kindly received by all the Priests'. We were guided about the churches and the town, shown the Scurl family graves and the house of Mr Symonds, the clockmaker, and wondered why, in St Mary's, Sir Roger de Kerdiston (d. 1337) lies on a bed of cobbles. And then, by way of elevenses, we were treated to the most wonderful refreshments.




*Notice outside St Mary's church, Reepham, Saturday 4th October (Photograph – but not spelling! – by Keith Bloomfield)*

From Reepham our driver took us northward, via Holt, to Letheringsett. On the subject of the driver, I should say that he was excellent: courteous, helpful and adept at negotiating the narrow Norfolk lanes. We were thus far more fortunate than were the Woodfordes on the aforementioned occasion when, travelling in the Lenwade Bridge Post Chaise they discovered their driver to be 'a Boy but a very fresh Driver' who 'drove sadly'.

Almost two hours had elapsed since our last meal by the time we sat down for lunch at the King's Head, formerly the brewery tap of the brewing enterprise run by the diarist – and Woodforde's contemporary – Mary Hardy. We were fortunate enough to have with us our fellow member and editor of Mary's diary, Margaret Bird, who pointed out the principal buildings, including the Hardy home and guided us across the busy road to St Andrew's church. This was to stand us in good stead when it came to Mrs Bird's talk later in the day. In the meantime my own attention was drawn to the epitaph of the admirable Johnson Jex, the village blacksmith who advanced 'from the forge to the crucible, And from the horse-shoe to the cronometer [sic]', and 'lived and died a scientific anchorite'.

Unfortunately, by this time the rain had set in and when we reached Wells-next-the-Sea sea and Wells could scarcely be distinguished. This is where Pauline Fletcher came into her own, guiding us to what was formerly the Standard Inn where, in 1787, Woodforde had eaten 'some bread and Cheese and Butter and drank some Porter'; an event appropriately marked with a brass plaque.

In the evening we enjoyed a hearty meal (although the Imperishable's name went strangely untoasted) and that was followed by an excellent illustrated talk from Mrs Bird on "Fairs and Frolics in the Norfolk of James Woodforde and Mary Hardy". Our understanding enriched by what we had seen earlier in the day, the general opinion among veteran frolickers was that this was one of the very best presentations we had had the good fortune to experience. Mrs Bird, whose superbly edited and produced volumes of Mary Hardy's diary were on sale at the book-stall, is to be congratulated on providing us with a thought-provoking insight into the changes that were really taking place in late eighteenth century Norfolk. *[A written version of Mrs Bird's talk can be found elsewhere in this Journal. Ed.]*

By Sunday morning the showers had given way to sunshine as we made our way to Weston Longville for harvest festival (our notions of both of which had been challenged the previous evening!). The lovely service marked two notable events. It was celebrated by Canon Peter Halls on the 50th anniversary of his ordination and it was the last service at Weston before Cassie and Selwyn left for Winterton-on-Sea later in the month. Selwyn will have left behind a fine musical tradition of which we were reminded by the choir's beautiful singing of the anthem 'Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it'. Refreshments were served afterwards and, on behalf of the Society, Mr Brayne presented the departing Tilletts with a volume of Woodforde's diary and reminded us of the warm welcome we had always received at Weston and of their huge contribution to the success of Norfolk frolics and, especially, for arranging the memorable concert 'Musick for the Parson' in 2010.

After church we crossed the road to the Parson Woodforde and an excellent Sunday lunch. Ann Williams was announced as being the winner of the Quiz and Rob was thanked for managing, with reassuring efficiency and good humour, what was universally agreed to have been a most enjoyable week-end.

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# LEAVES FROM AN UNWRITTEN JOURNAL

## Anne Donne – Mrs Bodham, 1756–1846. Pt II (cont.)

*Mary Barham Johnson inherited a great number of family papers and portraits which no doubt did much to inspire her keen interest in the lives of her forebears and, especially, in that of Anne Bodham. In 1984 she presented a copy of this* unwritten *journal to the History Group of the Mattishall Society. It was composed by Mary from a variety of sources, including Parson Woodforde's Diary and family letters and other papers and amounts to a most interesting biography of one of the Rotation Club's most attractive characters.*

*We are grateful to Mrs Iris Coe of Mattishall for transcribing the 'Journal' from the MS and to Mary's great-nephew Dr Martin Sharman for blessing an enterprise of which this is the fourth instalment.* (Ed.)

### 1779

*Sat. Jan. 2.*
Terrible storm in the night – the house shook – tiles blown down. The leads on the Church roof are lifted and lie in great rolls. We hear that most of the tiles are off Mattishall Burgh Church. It was the worst wind in memory – many trees down.

*Mon. Jan. 4.*
Our Rotation – Mrs Howes unable to come, Mr Howes having put up his Chaise again. Much talk of the damage to Churches in the storm. Mr Woodforde reckons it will cost him £50 to repair the damage to his. Bill Woodforde has changed his mind and gone into Somerset, not intending to go in the 'Chatham'.

*Sat. Jan. 9.*
My Bro. walked to Weston yesterday and stayed the evening. It being a very dark night I suffered much anxiety, but he arrived home safely, Mr Woodforde having lent him a lanthorn. There is small-pox again at Weston.

*Fri. Jan. 22.*
Mr Bodham drove us to Lyng to dine at the Baldwins, where we met the Hamertons and a Capt Lewin, who has taken John Hamerton as a

Midshipman, and has agreed to take Bill Woodforde also. Poor Mr Woodforde much distressed at Bill's behaviour. His Father writes that he intends getting him a Lieutenancy of Marines, but no confidence can be placed in that. Mr Woodforde went off after Tea to bury a corpse, but returned to supper.

*Sun. Jan. 24.*
Mr Woodforde kindly rode over to read Prayers and preach at Mattishall this afternoon, my Bro. being obliged to be at Loddon. Weston Church being so much damaged in the late storm it has not been possible to hold Services there since. He and Mr B— walked back with Molly Donne and self and stayed some little time.

*Tues. Jan. 26.*
We set down 10 to dinner at Hockering to-day – a merry party. Mr and Mrs Paine (Mr Howes' daughter) and Mr Priest as well as the usual company. Took Molly Donne though she is rather young for such meetings. The men made much of her. She is a dear, pretty girl. Mrs Howes is mad at her husband for putting down his Chaise and making her a prisoner.

*Fri. Jan. 29.*
To Colton yesterday to the Barnhams to meet the Kerrs – a very elegant dinner – the men a long time over their wine. Stayed till near midnight. To-day the same company met at Weston – all somewhat fatigued.

*Mon. Feb. 1.*
My Bro. and I with Sister and Bro. Hewitt to call upon Mr Woodforde, they having been prevented going of some time due to my Sister's indisposition. Drank Tea, played cards, and returned home to supper.

*Tues. Feb. 2.*
Dined at Mr Bodham's – his last Rotation before we leave Mattishall. Mrs Howes has prevailed upon her husband to get his Chaise out again.

*Thurs. Feb. 4.*
Yesterday we returned the Barnhams and Kerrs hospitality, and invited Mr Woodforde and Mr Bodham to meet them. I gave them

Carp, Turkey, Pork and Tongue, Plum Pudding, and for supper a Couple of Fowls. They were all very gay and stayed till after 2 o'clock this morning.

*Tues. Feb. 9.*
The same company as last week at Mr Bodham's. We were sad bidding Farewell to our friends whom we may never see again. It was near 4 o'clock in the morning e'er we left. Shall I ever again go to that house I wonder!

*Mon. Feb. 22.*
Rotation at Weston. Somewhat flat and sad. Home early.

*Fri. Feb. 26.*
Yesterday entertained our friends of the Rotation Club for the last time before we leave. Played cards till after midnight.

*Mon. Mar. 1.*
A pleasant meeting at Mr du Quesne's. How we shall miss these comfortable visits.

*Thurs. Mar. 4.*
Dined at the Howeses for the last time. Mr Bodham brought the new Rector of Garvestone, Mr Hall. Very sad at bidding Farewell to all our friends of the Rotation Club.

*Fri. Mar. 5.*
To Dereham to bid Farewell to Uncle and Aunt Donne. Dear Uncle begins to look the old man.

*Tues. Mar. 9.*
At Mr Hewitt's. My Bro. went off for Norwich this morning with Mr Bodham, Mr Ashill and Mr Hall, and will proceed to Brome in the afternoon when the first wagon of furniture should arrive. This will be my last night in Mattishall where we have spent three happy years. I cannot but look with apprehension to what the future may hold for me.

* * *

## Part III. The Rector's Sister

### 1779–1780

*Tues. April 6. Brome.*
Who should turn up this afternoon but Mr Woodforde and Mr Bodham. They rode over from Norwich, 14 miles, and were much fatigued on arrival. After dining they saw over the house and garden and were pleased to find us so comfortable and the house so pretty. Mr Woodforde intends to go a ride with Mr Hall round the coast from Cromer to Wells and thence to Houghton to see the fine collection of pictures. He and his man Will set off for Norwich about 6 o'clock, though we pressed him to stay the night. I fear he thought it might put us to inconvenience to accommodate so many, being scarce settled here. We prevailed upon Mr Bodham to remain, it being out of the question for him to undertake so long a ride without rest. He is somewhat low, his Brother Edward being in a decline and his life despaired of.

*Wed. April 7.*
Mr Bodham and his man left us this morning for Diss, where Mr Edward Bodham resides. He was very low at parting, and declares that he misses us much at Mattishall.

*Sun. June 6.*
At last we have some gaiety. The Players being at Bungay we have seen 'The Way of the World', and go to-morrow to 'The School for Scandal', with Miss Vertue and her Brother.

*Fri. June 18.*
On Monday saw 'As you like it', and yesterday 'Percy' by the celebrated Miss Hannah More – rather heavy stuff.

*Fri. June 25.*
Have seen three Plays this week, 'The Merry Wives', 'The Duenna' and 'Know your own mind' in which the lover was somewhat like Mr Bodham. The girl brought him to the point through arousing his jealousy – but who is there that I could try that trick on, even if it were certain to succeed, which I very much doubt. My Bro. Castres informed me this evening that he *knows his own mind* and it is to marry Nanny Vertue. It is what I have been expecting. I think they

will suit each other well. He is good enough to say that I must continue making my home here, but I shall not do so if I can contrive to live elsewhere.

*Sat. Aug. 7.*
We hear rumours of French and Spanish Fleets being in the Channel. Am somewhat apprehensive, for I go next week to Catfield and then to Yarmouth.

*Sat. Dec. 4.*
My Bro. has been to Norwich to arrange for his marriage. It is to be by Licence, for he refuses to call his own Banns. He met Mr Woodforde and Mr Bodham at the King's Head. Mr Woodforde has been in Somerset all the summer. He has brought back a Niece, Miss Nancy Woodforde, Bill's Sister, to keep house for him. One of his Sisters, Mrs Clarke, and her son, are come to stay with him for several months. Bill is now on a Sloop of War, but is tired already of the sea.

**1780**

*Mon. Jan. 10.*
My dear Brother Castres was married to-day in Norwich to Nanny Vertue. She has some money of her own, and her Brother, who has inherited a large estate at Barningham, has declared his intention of leaving it to her eldest son should he die without an heir. He is at present unmarried.

*Thurs. Feb. 17.*
Mr Bodham has been spending a week with us. He is very low since his Brother Edward's death, and is nervous concerning his own health. His Brother has left him his lands in Mattishall and Tuddenham, which will enable him to live more comfortably.

*Mon. April. 24.*
My Bro. went yesterday to Norwich to preach at St Andrew's for the Charity Schools, an honour he would willingly have forgone, for he is much hurried when preaching away. Poor Mr Woodforde was also chosen this year.

*Fri. July 28. Catfield.*
Mr Bodham is here! We have prevailed upon him to stay the night, it being more than 25 miles ride to Mattishall. He had been at Brome, but finding I had come here, came looking for me, the reason being that he had at last summoned up courage to ask me to become his wife! Oh, why did he not ask me months back when he knew that Castres was to be married – it would have saved me much anxiety. Now he sees no reason for delay, but I tell him I must have time for some gowns making. He wishes me to have a pink gown,f or I was in pink when he first saw me at a Dereham Assembly. That was 15 years back. It has been a long time to wait. My Sister Balls says it is my own fault – I should have taken a lesson from Davie – but, as I pointed out, her boldness has not as yet procured her a husband!

*Sat. Sept. 9.*
My Bro. and Sister Donne have been at Sister Hewitt's at Mattishall for Mr Hewitt to draw up their Marriage Settlement. Nanny will not hear of Castres selling any land, and has been so good as to make over to me £600 of her own money, which is the amount of the Legacy due to me from my dear Father. We are all invited to the Hewitts next week when the Documents will be ready for our signatures.

*Tues. Sept. 19. Mattishall.*
My Bro. and Sr. Donne and I dined yesterday at Mr Bodham's with him and his Sister Mary Bodham and Mr Woodforde. The Hewitts still refuse to meet Mr Bodham, which will be embarrassing when I am married. To-day we have been to Dereham to see dear old Uncle Donne. He is much pleased at Castres' marriage, and also congratulated me on my approaching marriage, though I fear that Mr Hewitt has not prepossessed him in Mr B—'s favour.

*Wed. Sept. 20.*
Mr Bodham drove me to Weston to dine. Miss Nancy Woodforde is an agreeable young woman – very fond of her Uncle – but misses her relations, and finds it lonely at Weston. She is somewhat lame which, as they keep no carriage, confines her much at home. Her Bro. Bill is now a Midshipman and is on the South Roads chasing Paul Jones. We were sorry not to see Mr du Quesne who is gone for Scotland with the Townshends. We also missed the Howeses and

Davie, for Mr Woodforde could not entertain so many as there are at present at Hockering, and he would never invite one and not all.

*Fri. Sept. 22.*
Went with Bro. and Sr. Hewitt to the Howeses to meet Mr and Mrs Paine, Mrs Davie and her Brothers Dr Charles Roope and Lieut. Turner Roope. Music after dinner. Turner Roope sang very well. No cards, much to Miss Woodforde's relief who would sooner give her money than play, for she finds us too quick! She is a great favourite with Mr Howes, who sent his Chaise for her.

*Mon. Dec. 25. Brome.*
Kitty and John Johnson are here for Christmas. Coz. William and Coz. Anna and their whole family have been over for the day – a merry party. Willie Donne is now at Oxford and intends going into the Church. Kitty Donne is grown a beautiful girl and will soon be breaking the hearts of the young men. Kitty Johnson much enjoyed the company of Molly and Anne Donne for she seldom sees any other girls. It has been the happiest Christmas I can ever remember.

## Part IV. Mrs Bodham of South Green

### 1781–1789

*Thurs. Feb. 8. South Green, Mattishall.*
This morning Mr Bodham and I were married by my dear Brother at Brome, Mr B—'s Father and Sister with us. After dinner we set off for Mattishall. I can scarce believe that I am now Mistress of this large house. A lot wants doing to it to make it more comfortable. The House-keeper and Servants are exceeding civil to me. I fancy they welcome having a Mistress.

*Thurs. Mar. 8.*
This afternoon our friends of the Rotation Club came to make the Wedding Visit. Wore my pink gown and coat with ermine trimming and the gauze apron with two flounces, my best cap with the painted ribbands, and my white shoes with the silver buckles Mr Bodham gave me. Mr Woodforde hired a Chaise to bring Miss Woodforde and Mrs Davie. They were very smart, Miss Woodforde in an

apricot gown with dark green ribbands, her hair prettily curled. Invited her to spend a week with me later in the year. She is very intimate with Davie, who has been at Weston all the winter.

*Thurs. April 5.*
Dined at Mr du Quesne's – quite like old times, though we all missed my dear Brother. Mrs England [the Housekeeper] was most civil, saying how pleased they all were at our marriage. Shall be relieved when I come to the end of these congratulations, almost hearing them think "About time too"! Much talk of the Highwaymen who have been lurking alarmingly in these parts, and committing robberies. Mr Woodforde has been lately at Dereham with Mr Hall – saw Quebec Castle where Mr B— and I first met when I was about 18. They called to see Betsy Davie at her School, an attention which much gratified Mrs Davie. Mr Woodforde has kindly consented to administer the Holy Sacrament at Brand on Sunday sennight for Mr B—.

*Thurs. April 26.*
Our Rotation dinner – the first since our marriage. Miss Woodforde unable to be with us, they having no carriage, and Mr and Mrs Howes having no room in theirs, Mrs Davie being with them. Their driver and Mr Woodforde's man Will going up the village and not returning by 9 o'clock, Mr Woodforde rode off in high dudgeon with Mr du Quesne. The Howeses man Tye, when he did return, being too drunk to drive, we were obliged to send them home by James. A distressing end to a happy evening.

*Fri. May 4.*
Have been at Norwich for a few days. Mr B— much pleased at his reception by my Cousins, Dr and Mrs Donne, and the girls, Kitty, Molly and Anne. Fred is becoming a smart young man, and little Edward, now 4 years old, a most engaging little fellow. Last Monday, in our way to Norwich, we dined at Hockering and met all our old friends. Mrs Howes had sent her Chaise for Miss Woodforde.

*Wed. May 9.*
Dined at Mr du Quesne's – Mrs Davie there with the Howeses, but Miss Woodforde not.

*Wed. May 16. Swaffham.*
On a visit to Mr B—'s Father and Sister. Have made the acquaintance of Aunt Bodham who lives next door. Sister Bodham delighted to introduce me to all her friends.

*Tues. May 22. South Green.*
Uncle and Aunt Donne drove over, bringing Coz. Tom's Betsy to spend a few days with us – a fine girl – going on for 17. It being our Rotation Day, our friends were delighted to meet her. Mr Grigson of Reymerstone dined with us to-day. Uncle came in a new carriage – a one-horse Chair which can be open or shut. Mr B— is determind to have one like it. Mr Howes's new man and Mr Woodforde's man Will going to the Gaunt, and not being back by 8 o'clock as ordered, Mr Woodforde rode home with Mr du Quesne, much distressed, the same thing occurring the last time they were here. Mr Howes turned that man off, and will likely do the same by this one.

*Tues. June 12.*
Dind at Mr du Quesne's. Mr Woodforde talked much of his dinner a few days since for his Squire Custance and his Lady. They are civil indeed to him. Mrs Custance having taken a great fancy to Miss Woodforde takes her for airings in her carriage, and spends mornings with her lace-making. Miss Woodforde says she is a Lady without the least spark of pride.

*Thurs. June 21.*
Rotation at Hockering. Mr Howes sent his Chaise for Miss Woodforde, Mrs Davie and Betsy who are on a visit to Weston. After spending a few days there, Miss Woodforde will come with the Howeses to ours on Monday.

*Mon. June 25.*
Our Rotation – 8 in number. Mr du Quesne was in a rare fuss concerning the dinner he is to give next week for his Squire Mr Townshend, his Wife, and his Sister Mrs Cornwallis (the Wife of the Archbishop), his man Robert England being ill of a fever. Mr Woodforde offered to lend him his man Will to wait at table.

*Thurs. July 10.*
A small party at Weston – only the Howeses and ourselves – Mr du

Quesne being gone to London with Mrs Cornwallis. His good old Servant Robert England died last week. Miss Woodforde shewed us some fans that Mrs Custance has given her. She is most industrious with her ribbon and lace work. Her Uncle reads the History of England to her while she works. On Sundays she reads him a Sermon.

*Wed. July 18.*
A large party at Hockering to-day. Took our new Vicar, Mr Smith, who intends to join the Club when he shall be settled. At present he lodges at Mr Hewitt's. Rebecca and Mary Priest and their Father were there with their Uncle and Aunt from Norwich. With Nancy Woodforde and Davie we were 7 Ladies – and very merry we were. Mr Smith was pleased at his reception, and looks to an agreeable sojourn amongst us. He is a man of about 45 – somewhat serious – not married, having his Mother to support.

*Sat. July 28.*
A full house all week with Sister Bodham, my dear Bro. and Sr. Donne, and Niece Kitty Johnson. Yesterday my Bro. and Mr. B— rode over to Weston and prevailed upon Mr Woodforde to return with them to dine here. My Bro. and Sr. returned home to-day taking Kitty with them.

*Tues. July 31.*
Our Rotation. Mrs Howes too ill to be with us. Sr. Bodham enjoyed meeting Davie, who entertains her vastly. Mr Smith appears much smitten by her.

*Fri. Aug. 3.*
To Mr Smith's – only Mr Woodforde and ourselves, which was just as well, there being no convenience for a large party. Sister Bodham much diverted by Mr Smith's disappointment in not seeing Mrs Davie!

*Tues. Aug. 28.*
A merry party at Weston – Mrs Paine being there we were 5 Ladies. Nancy Woodforde shewed us the beautiful jewellery Mrs Custance has given her. The Custances are now moved into the house that has been building about a mile from the Parsonage. Mr du Quesne is

back from Lambeth, but the Archbishop and Mrs Cornwallis being come to Honingham he is kept dancing backward & forward which he professes to dislike, though he is I fancy flattered by their attention.

*Tues. Sept. 4.*
A pleasant afternoon at Mr du Quesne's. He had sent his Chaise after Nancy Woodforde, for which I was thankful or I should have been the only Lady, Mrs Howes being ill and Mrs Paine with her.

*Wed. Oct. 31.*
My dear Bro. Castres sent his man Charles to inform us that dear Nanny was safely delivered yesterday morning of a daughter – both doing well, God be praised. The child is to be named Anne Vertue.

*Tues. Nov. 27.*
Rotation at Hockering – Mr Smith with us. Mrs Howes somewhat better – had sent her Chaise for Nancy Woodforde, Davie being there.

*Sat. Dec. 1.*
News of a terrible defeat of our Armies in America –7000 men obliged to surrender, and many ships taken. Many people think a shocking blunder has been made in undertaking War against our kith and kin.

*Thurs. Dec. 27.*
Our Rotation yesterday. Mr Bodham fetched Nancy Woodforde to spend a few days with us. In his way here Mr Woodforde called to enquire after Mrs Howes and learned the melancholy tidings that Mr Paine has drowned himself in a pit. We cannot think what can have induced him to do such a thing, such a sensible-seeming man, and cheerful enough when we met him lately. The rain being very heavy we prevailed upon Mr Woodforde and Mr du Quesne who were riding to wait until it cleared which it did about 11 o'clock. Mr Howes and Mrs Davie gave Mr Smith a cast in their Chaise. Heard that St John Priest is appointed a Master of Bury School, and that Miss Virtue Baldwin is married to Mr Robert Elwin of Booton.

*Sat. Feb. 2.*
Have been a week or more at Swaffham. Mr B— returned home for his Sunday duty, and came for me yesterday. He went on Tuesday to the Howes's Rotation, though very cold, snowy weather. Mrs Howes somewhat better.

*Fri. Feb. 8.*
Fast Day. Too cold to venture to Church.

*Sat. Feb. 9.*
Hear that poor Mrs Howes died last night – a great shock, not having suspected her of being so ill.

*Tues. Feb. 12.*
Mr B— attended Mrs Howes' funeral as one of the Bearers. Mr du Quesne conducted the Service. This is the third wife poor old Mr Howes has buried. A cold, snowy day.

*Tues. Mar. 19.*
Our Rotation. Davie came with Mr du Quesne, but Nancy Woodforde's bad knee prevents her getting into a Chaise. Waited dinner some time for old Mr Howes, but had near finished ere he arrived – somewhat to our embarrassment, not having seen him since his wife died. Much talk of the fall of the Ministry and a possible Truce with America. In his way to Swaffham to fetch his Sister, Mr B— called in at Uncle Donne's to enquire – found him very ill – they fear a cancer. Pray God he may not suffer long.

*Wed. Mar. 27.*
Mr B— and Mr Smith rode to Weston, but I durst not venture in this weather.

*Easter Day*
But the weather too bad to go to Church.

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## THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1968 by the Rev. Canon L. Rule Wilson and may be said to have two main aims: one, to extend and develop knowledge of James Woodforde's life and the society in which he lived, and the other, to provide opportunity for fellow enthusiasts to meet together from time to time in places associated with the diarist, and to exchange news and views.

Membership of the Parson Woodforde Society is open to any person of the age of 18 years and over upon successful application and upon payment of the subscription then in force, subject only to the power of the committee to limit membership to a prescribed number.

The Annual membership subscription of £16 (overseas members £25, student members £10) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

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**Website:**
**www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk**




The Parson Woodforde Society is a registered charity no. 1010807

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